

## Hearing the Voice of God

- Habakkuk 2

- What would you think if I told you that sometimes I hear the voice of God?
  - Would you associate me with the crazy people who hear voices?
  - Would you think that I have become like one of the modern day Christians?
- What would you think if I told you that **YOU** should hear His voice also?
- Do you really believe that God speaks?

- Job did...

- Job 33:14 KJV

14) For **God does speak** - now one way, now another - though man may not perceive it.

- Though Man may not perceive it...
  - **God does speak**
    - Not always audibly
    - Not always through words...
- It's not comfortable in our culture to consider yourself being spoken to by God
- It's much more acceptable to approach this relationship with our Heavenly Father at an "arms length"
  - To relegate His instructions to simply the written word
- Even if we do feel sometimes that clearly God is trying to send us a message, we can tend to close off our hearts to those thoughts...
- God warned the Jews against doing the same thing in Hebrews 4

- Hebrews 4:7 KJV

- 7) Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

- Do not harden your heart to the voice of God

- Open yourself up o receiving that message

- We consider our Lord Jesus to be at the right hand of God, and to share in God's purpose and thoughts...

- One of the most convincing arguments for hearing the Voice of God comes from Jesus himself

- John 10:2-4 KJV

- 2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

- 3) To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

- 4) And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

- If we are truly sheep of the Good Shepherd, then we would know his voice

- This morning I would like to talk for a little bit about how we can come to know that voice

- A good starting point for the discussion is what Habakkuk said in Chapter 2...

- Habakkuk 2:1-3 NLT

- 1) I will climb up into my watchtower now and wait to see what the LORD will say to me and how he will answer my complaint.

- 2) Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer in large, clear letters on a tablet, so that a runner can read it and tell everyone else.

- 3) But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.

- From this example, and other places in the Scriptures, and from our own practical experience, we can piece together some keys to hearing the Voice of God

- Four Keys to hearing God's Voice

- **Key #1**

- **God's voice in your heart sounds like a flow of spontaneous thoughts**
- **Therefore, when you tune to God, you have to tune in to spontaneity**
- That is what makes this so difficult, and why it so often SEEMS like you are just thinking of these things yourselves...
- God's Voice comes to us as spontaneous thoughts, visions, feelings, and impressions
- For example, haven't each of us had the experience of driving down the road and having a thought come to us to pray for a certain person?
- It is fair to say that this is God calling us to pray for that individual
  - We acknowledge that fact when we learn later on that the person was having a struggle, and felt encouraged when we prayed...
- My question to you is, "What did God's voice sound like as you drove in your car?"
  - You didn't really HEAR God speaking to you, did you?
  - It is not an inner, audible voice
  - It's more that it is a spontaneous thought that lit upon your mind, isn't it?
- That is how God communicates to us, and our goal as followers of Him, is to learn how to tune in to that spontaneity
  - To learn how to live life on a higher, more spiritual plane, so that we are more aware of God working around us, and more attuned to those thoughts, visions, feelings and impressions
- That leads us to the second Key...

- **Key #2**

- **You need to learn to still your own thoughts and emotions, so that you can sense God's flow of thoughts and emotions within you**
- Look what Habakkuk said in verse 1,

*"I will climb up into my watchtower now and wait to see what the LORD will say to me"*

- Habakkuk knew that in order to hear God's quiet, inner, spontaneous thoughts, he had to first go to a quiet place and still his own thoughts and emotions

- Thinking this way, kind of helps me to look at Psalm 46:10 in a whole new light:

- Psalm 46:10 KJV

10) Be still, and know that I *am* God

- There is a deeper inner knowing in our heart that each of us can experience when we quiet our flesh and our minds

- There are several simple ways to quiet yourself so that you can more readily pick up God's spontaneous flow

- Showing your love to God through a quiet worship song is a very effective means

- We've been reading recently about David and his early years with Saul

- Did you notice that when David played what were, I assume, the Psalms on his harp, that the evil spirit would leave Saul, and a spirit of the Lord would come upon him

- The same was true of Elisha...

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 3:15 NLT

15) "Now bring me someone who can play the harp." While the harp was being played, the power of the LORD came upon Elisha

- Anytime that you become still and are poised before God you open yourself up to God's thoughts...

- I'm sure that many of you find that your time here at the Memorial Service provides an opportunity for you to be quiet before the Lord, and I'm also sure, that like me, people come into your thoughts here on Sunday mornings that you feel compelled to reach out to during the week

- This is meant to be a very open process...

- If thoughts come to you of things you have forgotten to do, then simply write them down and then dismiss them out of your head

- If thoughts of guilt or unworthiness come to your mind, then repent thoroughly, receive the washing of the blood of the Lamb, and put on His robe of righteousness, and see yourself spotless before the presence of God

- It is very important that you become still and properly focused if you are going to open yourself up to the word of God
- If you are not still, you will simply be receiving your own thoughts
- If you are not properly focused on Jesus, you will not receive what God intends you to receive, because you think about that upon which you have fixed your eyes
- This takes effort and even concentration
- Consider what God said to Jeremiah:

- Jeremiah 29:13 (NIV)

13) You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

- God said the same kind of thing to Moses:

- Deuteronomy 4:29 (NIV)

29) But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

- Therefore, if you fix your eyes upon Jesus, as it says in Hebrews 12:2, you will be able to hear what God wants you to hear
- Quite simply, this is accomplished by quietly worshiping our God, alone and in a quiet place, and then receiving out of the stillness that follows
- But, you can't ignore the next step in the process...

- **Key #3**

- **Pray, fixing the eyes of your heart upon Jesus**

- Remember how Habakkuk said, "I will wait and see how the Lord will answer me," and how God told him to record the vision?
- When Habakkuk prayed, he expected answers
  - He was going to wait until he could see how the Lord would answer him...
- He actually started looking for God's answer even as he prayed
- He was going to open the eyes of his heart, and look for God to speak to Him

- We should approach God in prayer the same way...
- The most obvious prerequisite to seeing God at work in our lives is that we need to look
- We need to look for supernatural circumstances occurring everyday in the world around us
- We can't be the kind of people whose minds are centered solely on fleshly and material things
  - Look up! Lift up your heart!
- God desires close, personal relationships with us
  - He wants us to be attuned to Him, and to hear his voice
- God wants this so much that He sacrificed His only son to allow us this access to Him
- A major purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection was that the veil be torn from top to bottom, giving us access into the immediate presence of God
- And we are commanded to draw near to God!
- Hebrews 10:19-22 NIV
  - 19) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,
  - 20) by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,
  - 21) and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
  - 22) **let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,** having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
- So, even though what I am talking about seems a bit unusual to a rational twentieth century culture, I believe that this is demonstrated and described as being a central biblical teaching and experience
- Open up your mind when you pray, and expect to hear back from God
  - You will
- And when you do, we are lead to Key # 4

- **Key #4**

- **Keep a Journal**

- Writing out of your prayers and God's answers, provides a great new freedom in hearing God's voice
- Remember what God told Habakkuk in Verse 2?
- Habakkuk 2:2 NLT
  - 2) Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer in large, clear letters on a tablet..."
- I'm not talking about keeping a Diary, I'm simply talking about writing down examples of how God has spoken to you, and what has become of it...
- You will find that this is a great facilitator to clearly discerning God's inner, spontaneous thoughts...
- As you look back over the years at what has happened to you, and when it happened, and most importantly, WHY it happened, you can see that it really wasn't random, spontaneous thoughts, but it was God directing you in a certain path the entire time
- While it is VERY difficult to see this while it is happening, it is much easier to look back
  - Hindsight is 20/20, and it allows you to see what God was REALLY doing with your life and the lives of your loved ones
- So, sit back comfortably, get out your pen and paper, and turn your attention toward God in praise and worship, seeking His face
- As you write out your question to God and become still, fixing your gaze on Jesus, you will begin to have some good thoughts in response to your question
  - Don't doubt it, simply write it down
  - Later, as you read your journaling, you can test it against Scripture to be sure...
- The heart is deceitfully wicked, so if you are not really sure if it is from God here are some good questions to ask yourself:
  - 1) Does it agree up with the WHOLE teaching of the Bible?

Don't start making things easier for yourself, and thinking that is what God wants for you. God wants you to follow his Word

2) Does it lead you into a closer relationship with God?

That is the purpose of our time here on Earth. Not to serve ourselves, but to develop a greater love for God

3) Does it lead you into expressing love, which is putting God's benefit and the benefit of others before your own?

Loving one another is what God wants most from us

4) Does it lead to a greater manifestation of Christ's life in you?

Are you becoming more Christlike?

5) Does it cause greater humility in you, and a greater dependence upon God?

God is not looking for strong people who can win every battle.  
God is looking for faithful people who trust in God to win the fight

• Doing this, you will find what God wants most from you...

• **Dialogue**

• You will find that you can build a relationship with God and with His son, Jesus

• You will find that you can truly come to know the man that we are here to remember today

• And knowing him, hearing his voice, will help you to follow him

• John 10:27 KJV

27) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: